AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. - 20. (canceled)

21. (new) An isolated nucleic acid consisting of 18 to 120 nucleotides wherein the sequence of the nucleic acid comprises:

      (a) at least 18 consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID NOS: 37404, 37418 or 37429;

      (b) an RNA equivalent of (a);

      (c) a sequence at least 46/78 identical to (a) or (b); or

      (d) the complement of any one of (a)-(c).

22. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 21, wherein the sequence of the nucleic acid comprises a sequence selected from the following: SEQ ID NOS: 37405, 37419 or 37430.

23. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 21, wherein the sequence of the nucleic acid consists of:

      (a) SEQ ID NO: 37404, 37418 or 37429;

      (b) an RNA equivalent of (a);

      (c) a sequence at least 46/78 nucleotides identical to (a) or (b); or

      (d) the complement of any one of (a)-(c).

24. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 21, wherein the nucleic acid consists of 18 to 24 nucleotides.

25. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 24, wherein the nucleic acid is an RNA.

26. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 25, wherein the nucleic acid is capable of modulating expression of a target gene.

27. (new) The nucleic acid of claim 26, wherein the nucleic acid is at least 15/24 complementary to a binding site sequence of 18 to 24 nucleotides of a target gene and wherein the binding site sequence is located in an untranslated region of RNA encoded by the target gene.

28. (new) A vector comprising an HCMV nucleic acid, wherein the HCMV nucleic acid consists of the nucleic acid of claim 21.

29. (new) A probe comprising an HCMV nucleic acid, wherein the HCMV nucleic acid consists of the nucleic acid of claim 21.

30. (new) A gene expression inhibition system comprising the vector of claim 28 and a means for inserting said vector into a cell.

31. (new) A gene expression detection system comprising the probe of claim 29 and a gene expression detector functional to selectively detect expression of at least one gene.